United Nations

EP

Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GC.17/12
30 November 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Seventeenth session
10-21 May 1993

ITEM 6 (a):* COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1992 REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION (ACC) TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 32/172 of 19 December 1977 and 32/197 of 20 December 1977, is divided into two parts. The first deals with coordination of environmental matters of current concern to the UN, the ACC and the Governing Council. These comprise: the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the requirements of Agenda 21; climate change; Convention on Biological Diversity; the State of the Environment 1972-1992; Inter-agency coordination in response to emergency situations, including the impacts of the conflict over Kuwait, the mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident and the experimental phase of the UN Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance; the conclusions and recommendations of major conferences; sustainable development, including the Inter-agency Project to Incorporate Environment into Development, General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 on sustainable development, the "Caring for the Earth" strategy, the Global Biodiversity Strategy, health and environment, and inter-agency cooperation at the regional level; the World Climate Programme and associated activities; Earthwatch; and the Global Environment Facility.

The second part of the report deals with the coordination of and follow-up to the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Council may wish to take note of the 1992 Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

---

* Refers to the number of the item on the provisional agenda (UNEP/GC.17/1.

1992 REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION (ACC) TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL*

I. General Environment Coordination Matters

1. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and Agenda 21.

2. Climate change.

3. Convention on Biological Diversity.

4. State of the environment 1972-1992.

5. Interagency cooperation in response to emergency situations:

   (a) The environmental impacts of the Gulf War;

   (b) Mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident;

   (c) Experimental phase of the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance.

6. Major conferences.

7. Sustainable development:

   (a) Inter-agency project;

   (b) General Assembly Resolutions on sustainable development (42/186, 42/187);

   (c) "Caring for the Earth" World Conservation Strategy;

   (d) Global Biodiversity Strategy;

   (e) Health and environment;

   (f) Inter-agency cooperation at the regional level.

8. World Climate Programme and associated activities.

9. Earthwatch.

10. Global Environment Facility (GEF).

II. Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (UNEP)

1. Preparations for UNCED.

2. Preparations for implementing Agenda 21.

3. Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD).

4. Implementation of the PACD in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

---

* Administrative Committee on Coordination, second regular session of 1992, New York, 20-21 October 1992.

1992 REPORT OF THE ACC TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) pursuant to General Assembly resolution 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system and of General Assembly resolution 32/172 of 19 December 1977 on the United Nations Conference on Desertification.

2. In its decision 16/19 of 31 May 1991, the Governing Council recalled its earlier decisions 14/2 and 14/4 of 18 June 1987, in which the ACC was requested to continue to report to the Governing Council on an annual basis. Consequently, the Executive Director of UNEP convened a meeting of the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters (DOEM) in Vienna from 16 to 18 September 1992, at the invitation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to consider environmental issues of common interest to the United Nations system, and the Inter-agency Working Group on Desertification met in Vienna from 14 to 16 September. The present report based on the above two meetings was adopted by the ACC at its second regular session of 1992 held on 20 to 21 October 1992.

3. The report is divided into two parts, the first dealing with certain environmental matters of current concern to the United Nations system, the ACC and the Governing Council, the second with the coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

4. Taking into account the fact that the 1991 ACC Report to the UNEP Governing Council prepared in the latter part of 1991 will only be submitted to the Governing Council at its session in 1993, the Governing Council may wish to re-examine its decisions 14/2 and 14/4 of 18 June 1987 in which the ACC was requested to continue to report to the Governing Council on an annual basis. The ACC is of course aware that the Governing Council of UNEP will review the issue of the periodicity of its meetings at its next regular session in 1993. The Governing Council may also wish to reassess the focus of future reporting given the many other reporting requirements concerning environment, including those related to the General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187, and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The Governing Council is invited to identify the scope, objectives and specific use to be made of the ACC report with a view to assisting the ACC to rationalize its preparatory process and to ensure that the report fully meets the specific priority requirements of the UNEP Governing Council. In doing so the Governing Council will take into consideration the decision of ACC that an assessment of new and existing reporting requirements relevant to Agenda 21 will be undertaken by the Inter Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD). The findings of such an assessment would assist in avoiding duplication in reporting and assuring cost effectiveness and foster integration of environment and development.

I. GENERAL ENVIRONMENT COORDINATION MATTERS

1. *UNCED and Agenda 21*

5. The outcome of UNCED and the decisions taken at the Earth Summit stand out as an historic commitment by States, taken at the highest level, to respond to the urgent needs of sustainable development. The Conference reflected the strong desire of States Members to ensure that the United Nations system address their environment and development concerns in an effective, coherent and integrated way.

6. The ACC notes the provisions for financing contained in Agenda 21 and urges the international community to give timely consideration to the provision of adequate and additional financial resources for its implementation by developing countries, including resources to enable the United Nations system to carry out effectively its role in assisting countries in the implementation of Agenda 21. In this respect, the ACC also notes the recommendations contained in Agenda 21 concerning the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility to cover the agreed incremental costs of relevant activities under Agenda 21, in particular for developing countries.

7. The ACC is fully cognizant of the fact that the Conference has clearly placed on it the responsibility for effective monitoring, coordination and supervision of the involvement of the United Nations system in the follow-up process to Rio. This has required a critical analysis of the current situation in the area of coordination and a fresh look at system-wide requirements.

8. The Secretary-General accordingly established a small Inter-agency Task Force on Environment and Development, with the participation of the Executive Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Bank, The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and UNEP, with UNCED invited to attend as an *ex officio* member. The Task Force, chaired by the Director-General of FAO, submitted to the ACC its report containing a set of recommendations and proposals on a number of issues relating to the allocation and sharing of responsibilities, cooperation and coordination and reporting requirements of the United Nations system stemming from Agenda 21. The ACC at its October 1992 session decided to establish an Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development (IACSD), comprising the member organizations of the Task Force and two additional organizations to be designated by the Secretary-General, with the provision that membership would be reviewed after two years. ACC members and participants interested in specific issues placed on the agenda of the IACSD could also attend. The Chairman of the IACSD will be designated by the Secretary-General.

2. *Climate change*

9. The ACC welcomes the adoption of a United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which was opened for signature during UNCED at Rio.

10. The ACC notes Governing Council decision 16/41 on climate change, which includes a request to the Executive Director to assist Governments, particularly those of developing countries and small island countries, in country-specific studies to estimate the costs and benefits of dealing with climate change and identifying the available technology and technology needs on a country-by-country basis.

11. Following the fifth session of the WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in March 1991, sub-task 3, - issues related to energy and industry "Country Studies" has been initiated, concentrating on obtaining studies, particularly from countries not yet producing such information, to add to the substantial base already compiled by the Energy and Industry subgroup of IPCC Working Group III.

3. *Convention on Biological Diversity*

12. The ACC welcomes the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which was negotiated under the auspices of UNEP, assisted by FAO, UNESCO and IUCN, and opened for signature during UNCED at Rio.

13. The ACC further notes the three resolutions, in particular Resolution 2 of the Conference for the adoption of a Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Nairobi in May 1992, which provide for meetings of an Intergovernmental Committee on the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be convened starting in 1993, to prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to take appropriate measures for the early implementation of some of the provisions of the Convention.

14. A first set of country studies have been undertaken under UNEP auspices. This initiative has to be continued in order to have a representative sample from which to extrapolate a global estimate of costs, benefits and unmet needs for the conservation of biodiversity. In this respect, it is of the utmost importance that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) should continue to support such studies and that developed countries, in addition to undertaking their own studies on biological diversity, should assist interested developing countries which lack financial and technical resources to undertake relevant studies.

4. *State of the Environment 1972-1992*

15. The State-of-the-Environment Report 1972-1992 contains a profoundly disturbing message. Not only are the problems addressed by the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment still with us - and some of them are even worse than before - but new, serious global environmental threats have also emerged (e.g. ozone layer depletion, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and dangers of movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal).

16. The review of the nature, magnitude, causes and impacts of the ten major environmental issues, the analyses of the manner in which development strategies in the different economic sectors have contributed to each of these issues, as well as the evaluation of the responses to the emergence of these problems lead to the conclusion that there is an urgent need for a series of actions to be taken to halt environmental degradation. The report summarizes these actions for each sector.

17. However, progress has been made in scientific understanding of environmental problems and on approaches to environmental management as well as the development of international conventions. The conclusions of the report underline the important role the United Nations system must continue to play in dealing with the identified environmental problems within the overall context of economic and social development.

5. *Inter-agency Cooperation in response to emergency situations*

(a) The environmental impacts of the Gulf War

18. The ACC, recalling its 1991 Report to the UNEP Governing Council, notes that UNEP, in cooperation with WHO, WMO, FAO, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), UNDP, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), IUCN, the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), developed the United Nations Inter-agency Plan of Action soon after the cessation of hostilities to assess the environmental consequences of the war on the marine and coastal areas, atmosphere, terrestrial ecosystems and the hazardous wastes situation in the region, and to propose a programme for the mitigation of the adverse effects, rehabilitation and protection of the environment affected by the conflict.

19. Following decision 91/21 of the 38th session of its Governing Council, UNDP prepared a proposal for the socio-economic and environmental recovery of countries affected by the Gulf crisis, with a view to establishing a funding strategy. Since then, a Consolidated Rehabilitation Programme (CRP) for the environment of the ROPME region, has been developed. UNEP presented the CRP to a funding strategy meeting organized by UNDP on 16 December 1991, attended by 70 Governments, including major donors, in order to bring to the attention of the international community the nature of the damage inflected during hostilities and the magnitude of rehabilitation costs, estimated at $1.2 billion.

20. In February 1992, a pollution damage assessment mission in the ROPME sea area was undertaken by a fully equipped research vessel of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States, in cooperation with ROPME and IOC of UNESCO. The results of the expedition are currently being analysed.

21. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is currently in the process of establishing a team of experts (economists and social scientists) who will be fielded early 1993, in cooperation with ROPME, to establish the socio-economic parameters of damage inflicted during hostilities.

(b) Mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident

22. The ACC notes that, in spite of the reaffirmation by the General Assembly of its support to Chernobyl relief efforts (General Assembly resolution 46/150) and the continuing consultations between the United Nations Coordinator for Chernobyl Assistance and the affected republics and funding agencies, due to a lack of resources there has been very little progress in carrying out the Joint Plan prepared in 1991. The Inter-Agency Task Force continues to try to find means to assist the affected republics in a coordinated manner.

(c) Experimental phase of the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance

23. Following the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/224 of 22 December 1989, entitled "International cooperation in the monitoring, assessment and anticipation of environmental threats and in assistance in case of environmental emergencies" and in accordance with UNEP Governing Council decision 16/9 of 31 May 1991, a United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance (UNCUEA) was established on an experimental basis at the beginning of 1992 for a period of 18 months.

24. The United Nations Centre is being developed in cooperation and in coordination with other United Nations agencies and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and bodies, focusing on the assessment of and responses to man-made environmental emergencies. An inter-agency working group has been established in this connection.

25. The activities of the Centre will be evaluated by all relevant United Nations organizations and organs and an evaluation report will be prepared for the UNEP Governing Council at its seventeenth regular session in 1993.

26. The ACC welcomes General Assembly resolution 46/182 which established the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). CERF is designed as a cash-flow mechanism to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the United Nations system to requests for emergency assistance.

6. *Major Conferences*

27. The ACC notes the conclusions and recommendations of the major conferences listed below:

(a) UNIDO Conference on Ecologically Sustainable Industrial Development (ESID) (Copenhagen, October 1991);

(b) International Conference on Water and Environment (Dublin, January 1992);

(c) Regional Conferences on Sustainable Development in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in follow-up to the FAO Den Bosch Conference:

(i) The FAO Inter-regional Conference of Small Island Countries on Sustainable Development and Environment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Christ Church, Barbados, 7-10 April 1992);

(ii) FAO Consultation on Sustainable Development and Environment in Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, Chile, 28-30 April 1992);

(d) UNCTAD VIII, (Cartagena, Colombia, February 1992).

7. *Sustainable development*

(a) Inter-Agency Project to Incorporate Environment into Development

28. The ACC notes progress in the implementation of the Malaysian portion of the Inter-Agency Project. A team of experts from the University of Malaysia, working in consultation with all concerned government departments and ministries, industry, research institutions, NGOs, UNDP-Kuala Lumpur, UNEP and its partner agencies WHO, FAO, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), The International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Bank, UNDP, WMO and UNESCO, prepared and submitted to the Economic Planning Unit and the Department of the Environment the first drafts of the overview reports on policy and planning, and technical cooperation for environmentally sound development. The draft reports will be circulated to concerned institutions in Malaysia and collaborating organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. A national seminar is envisaged to consider recommendations contained in the report and the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system collaborating in the project will be invited to participate in the meeting. The second phase of the project will commence soon after finalization and adoption of the two overview reports. This experience will be evaluated with a view to developing modalities for the effective integration of environmental concerns into development planning.

(b) General Assembly resolutions on sustainable development

29. In response to General Assembly resolution 44/227, a consolidated report on progress in the implementation of actions for environmentally sound and sustainable development (follow-up of General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187) was prepared by UNEP (UNEP/GCSS. III/4) in consultation with Governments and the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The report was considered by the UNEP Governing Council at its third special session and submitted to the UNCED through its Preparatory Committee, and to the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council.

30. The ACC welcomes the review contained in the report and the appraisal of the progress made by a number of countries in environmental assessment, monitoring, information, awareness-building, education, training, policies, planning and management measures.

(c) "Caring for the Earth" World Conservation Strategy

31. As a follow-up to the publication in 1980 of the *World Conservation Strategy - Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development*, ACC notes that UNEP, IUCN and WWF jointly prepared and published *Caring for the Earth - A Strategy for Sustainable Living*, and launched it world-wide in October 1991. The Strategy provides a new action plan for living sustainably, from the top levels of government to the individual level, by listing 122 priority actions which communities should implement to safeguard or improve their environments and increase their quality of life.

(d) Global Biodiversity Strategy

32. UNEP, with the World Resources Institute (WRI) and IUCN, has also developed and published the *Global Biodiversity Strategy - Guidelines for Action to Save, Study and Use Earth's Biotic Wealth Sustainably and Equitably* as a subset of the Caring for the Earth and an elaboration of the *World Conservation Strategy, launched in 1980*. The Strategy attempts to stimulate and implement action locally, nationally, and internationally in a manner consistent with the principles, strategic elements and broad agenda for action contained in *Caring for the Earth*. A subsequent study *Global Biodiversity - Status of the Earth's Living Resources* has been prepared by UNEP/IUCN/WWF/ World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) as a contribution to the *Global Biodiversity Strategy*, and represents a first comprehensive overview of the status, use and management of global biological diversity, providing the objective data and analysis for its implementation.

(e) Health and environment

33. The 45th World Health Assembly adopted three resolutions which are of profound importance in the area of health and environment policy, namely:

WHA45.31 Health and Environment;

WHA45.32 International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS); and

WHA45.25 Women, Health and Development.

34. Resolution WHA45.31 on Health and Environment requests the Director-General, *inter alia*, to formulate a new global WHO strategy for environmental health, based on the findings and recommendations of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment and on the outcome of UNCED and to collaborate closely with other international organizations in the elaboration and implementation of the strategy in order to reinforce support to Member States in environmental health. This strategy is currently under preparation and will be submitted to the 93rd Executive Board in January 1993.

35. Resolution WHA45.32 on IPCS was prepared in response to the need for a greater role of IPCS in the international efforts to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals. It urges Member States to establish or strengthen governmental mechanisms to provide liaison and coordination between all parties involved in chemical safety activities and to increase financial, scientific and logistic support to IPCS. Resolution WHA45.25 on Women, Health and Development requests the Director-General, *inter-alia*, to establish in 1992 a Global Commission on Women's Health which would provide a forum from the grassroots to the highest political levels to produce an agenda for action on women's health and their role in promoting sustainable development.

(f) Inter-agency cooperation at the regional level

36. Inter-agency cooperation is also growing at the regional level. An Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific has been established at the initiative of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), involving United Nations organizations and bilateral agencies active in the region. The main purpose of this Committee is to exchange project information to avoid duplication and to identify joint activities. A similar initiative for inter-agency cooperation is also under way in the ESCWA region.

8. *World Climate Programme (WCP) and associated activities*

37. The World Climate Programme has been structured in accordance with the decisions of the WMO's XIth Congress and the sixteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, which based their decisions on the recommendations made by the Second World Climate Conference. Plans for implementation of the four components* of WCP have been developed and included in the WMO Long-Term Plan for 1992-2001, and subsequent sessions of scientific/advisory committees for these components have provided for specific advice on the implementation of WCP.

38. The Coordinating Committee for the World Climate Programme (CCWCP) held its first session in May 1992. Recommendations of the session were endorsed by the forty-fourth session of the WMO Executive Council in June 1992. The Executive Council, after consultations with participating agencies, in particular, UNEP, UNESCO and its IOC, FAO and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), decided to hold an intergovernmental meeting on the WCP and associated programmes from 14-16 April 1993, and WMO established an Organizing Committee and the Secretariat for the meeting.

39. Following an agreement among WMO, the IOC of UNESCO, ICSU and UNEP, the Joint Scientific and Technical Committee (JSTC) for the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) was established and has held its first session, and the Joint Planning Office (JPO) began its operations at WMO headquarters in Geneva. The relevant agencies and international organizations should fully support JSTC and JPO.

40. The WMO/UNEP IPCC completed the 1992 supplement to the Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and further efforts are being made by the Panel to address tasks identified in the Panel's renewed mandate.

9. *Earthwatch*

41. General Assembly resolution 44/224 affirmed the need for closer inter-agency cooperation and broader participation in Earthwatch to strengthen its capacity to make authoritative assessments, anticipate environmental degradation and issue early warnings to the international community. Resolution 46/217 re-affirmed the need to strengthen international cooperation in the monitoring, assessment and anticipation of environmental threats. UNEP designated an Assistant Executive Director for Earthwatch and began inter-agency discussions on Earthwatch through the DOEM and directly with individual agencies. The results of these actions are described in Governing Council document UNEP/GC/17/18/Add.1.

---

* The Data and Monitoring Programme, the Applications Programme, the Impacts and Response Strategies and the Research Programme.

42. The assessment of critical environmental problems through Earthwatch should involve close inter-agency cooperation. Agencies are thus called upon to broaden their individual approach to environmental assessment issues by working together to avoid duplication of activities. The resultant UN system-wide Earthwatch will contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21 and assist Governments to respond to major environmental problems.

43. Accordingly, Earthwatch will concentrate initially on the preparation of regular thematic environmental assessments, the development of criteria and procedures for issuing early warnings of emerging environmental threats, and the improvement of coordination within the UN system for monitoring and assessing the global environment, with particular attention to the interface between environment and development.

10. *Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

44. The ACC notes the Statement of the GEF participants, dated May 4 1992, on the future evolution of the Global Environment Facility beyond the pilot phase.

45. UNCED has made recommendations concerning the role of GEF as one of the major financial mechanisms for the implementation of Agenda 21. In doing so, it was noted that "funding for Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference should be provided in a way which maximizes the availability of new and additional resources and which uses all available funding sources and mechanisms" (Agenda 21 Chap. 33.16). In Chapter 33 of Agenda 21, "Financial Resources and Mechanisms", UNCED stressed that GEF: "should cover the agreed incremental costs of relevant activities under Agenda 21, in particular for developing countries (Agenda 21, 33.16 (a) (iii)).

46. ACC further notes that the Conference for the adoption of the agreed text of the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in Rio, by its resolution 1 of 22 May 1992 has invited the GEF to undertake the operation of the financial mechanism, on an interim basis, provided that the GEF has been fully restructured in accordance with Article 21 of the Convention; and that the Convention on Climate Change, also signed in Rio, stipulates that the GEF shall be the international entity entrusted with the operational financial mechanism on an interim basis, provided it will be appropriately restructured and its membership made universal.

47. The ACC welcomes the recommendations made by the GEF Participants Meeting in May 1992, in particular those calling for a greater involvement of the UN agencies in the GEF as cooperating and executing agencies, and the subsequent preparations for consultative meetings between the partner implementing agencies of the GEF (World Bank, UNDP and UNEP) and the UN agencies.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (PACD)

1. *Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)*

48. The ACC welcomes the significant efforts made by the Inter-agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD) organizations in preparing for UNCED and notes with satisfaction that the UNEP Governing Council at its third Special Session reaffirmed that desertification is a global environmental and socio-economic problem requiring special attention and global international cooperation, and that a number of recommendations to this effect were issued.

2. *Preparations for implementing Agenda 21*

49. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/161, UNDP, United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and UNEP prepared a draft report of the Secretary- General on drought and desertification, to be submitted to the General Assembly, which, in the light of the decisions of UNCED, requests the Secretary-General to highlight any requirements necessary to implement those decisions.

50. Agenda 21, Chapter 12 with its 6 programme areas would appropriately be considered as a framework for activities addressing desertification and drought-related problems. Chapter 12 builds upon the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification prepared by the United Nations Conference on Desertification (UNCOD) in 1977 and the revised plan presented by UNEP's Governing Council to UNCED. Accordingly, many agencies, while still in the process of consolidating their approaches to the implementation of Agenda 21, are reorienting their existing activities to fit the agreed framework and focusing on new activities to fill gaps so far not covered.

51. Several agencies intend to give special emphasis to assisting countries in translating the recommendations and proposals of Agenda 21, Chapter 12 into workable national plans and programmes.

52. It is recognized that a major constraint in implementing anti-desertification programmes is the lack of financial and other resources. In this regard, the countries participating in the GEF accepted to consider projects for anti-desertification activities under this facility so long as they are related to the adopted four core programmes. However, it is considered important that efforts to establish desertification as a core programme on its own merits within the GEF be continued. In the area of disaster prevention and rehabilitation, there appears to be a trend toward increasing assistance for relief activities over development activities. Therefore, there is a corresponding need to find ways to have relief work also serve the longer-term development needs.

53. ACC welcomes the proposal in Agenda 21 that the General Assembly should establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification and believes that such a convention would enhance national and international efforts to combat desertification.

3. *Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification*

54. Important assistance and a wide range of other activities implemented by the various agencies in relation to the recommendations of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification include:

- Assistance to countries to develop strategies to combat desertification which is provided by ESCAP, ESCWA, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNSO, World Bank;

- Projects aiming at integrated land use development which are implemented or supported by the Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD), FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNSO, World Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP), WMO;

- Drought preparedness, drought monitoring and/or drought relief activities which are well established in the programmes of DESD, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNDRO, WFP, WHO, WMO;

- Research projects and technology development programmes which are supported by DESD, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNIDO, UNSO, World Bank;

- Activities related to assessment and monitoring of desertification which are carried out by DESD, ESCAP, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNSO, WMO;

- Support for relevant training courses, scientific seminars and workshops which is provided by ESCAP, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UNSO, WFP, WMO;

- Efforts to raise public awareness of dryland degradation which are carried out by DESD, FAO, IFAD, Regional Economic Commissions, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNSO.

4. *Implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification in the Sudano-Sahelian Region*

55. Programmes supported by UNSO (as part of the UNDP/UNEP joint venture) for developing national plans and strategic frameworks for the management of natural resources in the context of desertification control are in progress in 21 Sudano-Sahelian countries.